

Relief to earthquake victims

†797. SHRI MAHENDRA SAHNI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that victims of earthquake are still left waiting for relief, even after one year since the disastrous quake hit the country despite all announcements;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to provide relief to the victims?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) A major earthquake occurred in Jammu & Kashmir a year ago *i.e.* on 8th October, 2005. No report, stating that victims of the earthquake are still left waiting for relief, has been received.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Government of India released Rs. 300.28 crore to the Government of J&K immediately after the earthquake to enable the State to undertake immediate rescue and relief operations. In addition, requisite logistic support, which includes the supply of tents, tarpaulin sheets, sleeping bags, mattresses, blankets, woolen clothes, utensils, medical aid and essential commodities etc. was provided.

A Special Package of Rs. 242.55 crore was also provided to the State for incurring expenditure towards construction of temporary shelters and provision of relief and construction material.

Distribution of relief on the ground is the responsibility of the concerned State Government.

Pending mercy petitions

798. DR. P.C. ALEXANDER . Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) how many petitions under Article 72 of the Constitution for pardon, commutation, etc. against sentence of death are pending with Government for more than a year, for one to three years and over three years; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

. (b) what steps, if any, are being taken to expedite decision in these cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) and (b) As on 31.10.2006, 23 cases of mercy petitions involving 44 condemned prisoners under Article 72 of the Constitution for pardon, commutation, etc., against sentence of death are pending with the Government. Out of which 2 cases are pending for less than a year, 8 cases for one to three years and 13 cases over three years. 22 petitions filed before the President of India have been processed in the Ministry of Home Affairs and submitted to the Hon'ble President of India for taking a decision on the petitions. One petition is being processed in the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Special cell for naxal problems

†799. SHRI DATTAMEGHE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a Special Cell has been created under the Home Ministry for the naxalite problems;

(b) if so, the main functions of this Cell;

(c) whether any steps have been taken for development work in the area having naxalite problems; and

(d) if so, the details of those steps?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SRIPARKASH JAISWAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The set up in the Ministry of Home Affairs dealing with the naxal problem has been strengthened. The main functions of this set up will be to ensure periodic review and close monitoring of Action Plans drawn up by the naxal affected States to deal with the naxalite menace on both security and development fronts

(c) and (d) The Government has been pursuing a multi-pronged approach to combat the naxal problem which, *inter alia*, includes focused, attention on integrated socio-economic development in the naxal affected areas.

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